

Application ser. no. 09/531,743.

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1. Applicant thanks the Examiner for his remarks and observations, which have greatly assisted Applicant in responding. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the application.

2. 35 U.S.C § 103

Claims 28-30 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Krane in view of Uppaluru. In order to describe the invention more clearly, Applicant amends claim 30 to describe:

"operating an interactive user operated Internet voice portal having established multiple predetermined vertical domains of interest and a hierarchy of attributes within each vertical domain of interest from top to bottom, the method comprising operations of:

responsive to a user placing a telephone call to the voice portal, identifying the user and obtaining user selection of a vertical domain of interest;

performing funneling operations comprising:

(a) building a vocabulary set containing top-level attribute values appropriate to the selected vertical domain of interest;

(b) querying the user to choose a top-level attribute value, applying speech recognition to user responses where recognized answers are limited to contents of the vocabulary set;

(c) until a bottom level attribute value is chosen, repeatedly performing operations comprising: (1) building an updated vocabulary set containing attribute values appropriate to the latest chosen attribute value, and (2) querying the user to choose a next-lower-level attribute value and applying speech recognition to user responses where recognized answers are limited to contents of the updated vocabulary set;

responsive to a bottom level attribute being chosen, conducting an Internet search of non-voice sources in any conventional web page format for prescribed types of information pertaining to the chosen bottom-

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level attribute value and audibly providing resultant information to the user via the telephone call."

Applicant notes that the system of Krane attempts to solve the problem of providing Internet access to data that is published in audio or spoken format. Krane describes a system for accessing pre-recorded audio messages over the Internet. Similar to Krane, Uppaluru describes a system and method for accessing voice and speech data files. The voice and speech data files, as shown and described in Figure 9 and at cols. 20-21 are pre-recorded audio information published specifically for access by users using a voice web browser. Additionally, as described at col. 8, lines 21-23, and lines 31-35 and at col. 12, lines 3-5, Uppaluru provides the capability of rendering non-voice data in the spoken word in extremely limited circumstances. Uppaluru describes a limited sub-set of the Internet, which is designated the "voice web." Uppaluru's voice web includes only web sites containing pages that have been extended with a variant of HTML, HVML (Hyper voice markup language). While it is possible to render textual information in the spoken word using Uppaluru's system, the information to be spoken must be included in HVML page and it must be identified using "voice tags" and further identified using a "type" attribute. Additionally, using Uppaluru's system, email can also be played for a user using text-to-speech conversion. However, the email facility can only be accessed from a "personal voice web"—a "standardized collection of linked voice web pages and web forms"

Thus, both Krane and Uppaluru both provide access to an extremely limited universe of information.

In sharp contrast, the invention is concerned with extending access to the Internet to anyone using convenient and readily available means. Thus, as shown in Figures 28 and 29 and described at page 35, line 20 to page 38, line 1, the invention retrieves non-spoken or non-audio information, such as text, from the Internet and transforms it into spoken output. Additionally, as described at page 9, line 23 to page 11, line 24, the invention accomplishes this by searching

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the internet for non-voice sources of information in conventional web page formats.

Applicant notes that at col. 7, lines 11-33, Uppaluru takes great pains to distinguish voice web pages from conventional web pages, discussing the shortcomings of conventional HTML web pages and explaining why they are unsuitable for telephone users.

The Examiner has previously acknowledged that Krane deals only with pre-recorded voice files. While Uppaluru can, under very limited conditions, perform text-to-speech conversion of text and email, there is no teaching or suggestion in the combination of the subject matter of amended claim 28. In fact Accordingly, Uppaluru explicitly teaches away from the invention as claimed Accordingly, claim 28 is deemed allowable over the combination of Krane and Uppaluru. In view of their dependence from an allowable parent, the dependent claims are deemed allowable without any separate consideration of their merits.

The above amendment is made solely for the purpose of describing the invention more clearly, in the interest of advancing prosecution of the application. Such amendment is not an indication of Applicant's agreement with the Examiner's position, nor does it signify Applicant's intention to sacrifice claim scope. Application expressly reserves the right to pursue patent protection of a scope it reasonably believes it is entitled to in one or more continuing applications.

For the record, Applicant respectfully traverses any and all factual assertions in the file that are not supported by documentary evidence. Such include assertions based on findings of inherency, assertions based on official notice, and any other assertions of what is well known or commonly known in the prior art.

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CONCLUSION

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In view of the foregoing, the Application is deemed to be in allowable condition. Applicant therefore respectfully requests reconsideration and prompt allowance of the claims. Should the Examiner have any questions regarding the Application, he is invited to contact Applicant's attorney at 650-474-8400.

Respectfully submitted,



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